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CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee

February 29, 2016 Public Hearing

**SJ 33, RESOLUTION PETITIONING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO
CONVENE AN ARTICLE V CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO OVERTURN THE
UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT'S DECISION IN CITIZENS UNITED V.
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**

Comments submitted by Gloria Bent, President League of Women Voters of
Connecticut

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The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization committed to effective public policy, the active involvement of citizens in their government and improving the electoral process.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on *SJ33 Resolution Petitioning the United States Congress to Convene an Article V Constitutional Convention to Overturn the United States Supreme Court's Decision in Citizens United v Federal Election Commission*. The League of Women Voters of Connecticut opposes SJ 33.

We appreciate the intent of the resolution to undo the disastrous impact of the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. However, we believe the complete lack of established procedures for an Article V Constitutional Convention make this a dangerous course of action with a very high risk of unintended consequences.

Respected advocacy groups like the Brennan Center, Center for Media and Democracy, Common Cause, CREW, Democracy 21, and People For the American Way have noted "regardless of any limits that are being placed in the state calls for a constitutional convention, it is widely believed that once a convention is called there is no way to limit the constitutional amendments that the convention can consider and on which they can act."¹

¹ <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2016/02/13034/reform-groups-strongly-oppose-constitutional-convention>

In 2015 Leagues of Women Voters across the country engaged in a national study of procedures for amending the constitution. Their research on constitutional conventions led the League of Women Voters U.S. to a similar conclusion: "Procedural safeguards must be put in place to protect democratic values and ensure that any proposed amendments reflect the concerns of citizens." ²

While the League of Women Voters of Connecticut appreciates the basic intent of this resolution, we must stand in opposition and urge its defeat until appropriate safe guards are in place that will ensure an Article V Constitutional Convention does not put current constitutional protections at risk.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments.

² <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-position-adopted-constitutional-conventions-under-article-v-us-const>